THE YALI NETWORK ONLINE COURSES

#YALILEARNS FIELD GUIDE

#YALILearns is a YALI Network-wide initiative to promote shared learning and collaboration among young African leaders through the use of the YALI Network Online Courses.

Introduction

What is YALI?

The **Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)** is a signature effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders. The initiative was launched in 2010 to support young African leaders as they spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa.

(1) **Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders:** The Mandela Washington Fellowship brings young leaders to the United States for six weeks of academic and leadership training, networking, and mentoring at top U.S. universities in one of three tracks: Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, or Public Management, followed by a summit in Washington, D.C. Several Fellows also participate in professional development opportunities in the United States with American NGOs, private companies, and governmental offices. https://yali.state.gov/washington-fellowship/

(2) **Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs):** YALI RLCs, located at four higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa) and two satellite campuses (Nigeria, Mozambique), offer experiential leadership training programs to young leaders between the ages of 18 and 35. Through short-term training offered in-person and online, professional development opportunities, and networking, the RLCs provide a platform for regional collaboration driven by young leaders. Partnerships with the private sector enhance the ability of the RLCs to provide exciting learning opportunities, entrepreneurship support, and access to technology to RLC participants. https://yali.state.gov/regional-leadership-centers/

(3) **The YALI Network:** The YALI Network – with nearly 500,000 members and growing – is a vibrant online community where young African leaders can network and collaborate on everything from creating tech sector startups to building community organizations that support women and girls' education. The Network empowers young leaders by giving them the opportunity to improve leadership and other skills through tailor-made online content (including courses, podcasts, blog posts, and professional development resources). Network members also engage with online campaigns on policy issues such as human rights, the environment, and civic engagement. Join the YALI Network at https://yali.state.gov/beinvolved/. Engage with YALI Network members at https://www.facebook.com/YALINetwork.

Why the YALI Network Online Courses were created?

The Department of State created the YALI Network Online Courses to provide access to experts and training not readily available in many African communities, particularly those in rural areas outside of major population centers. They were also created to give young African leaders access to American experts.

The courses provide enhanced knowledge of leadership, advocacy, entrepreneurial, and management skills that are part of the training offered to the Mandela Washington Fellows during their exchange trip to the U.S. Additionally, there are courses focused on three key policy themes: the environment and climate change, elections and civic engagement, and human rights.

The goal of these courses is to extend training to the larger YALI Network and assist Network members in creating and implementing solutions to challenges faced in their communities.

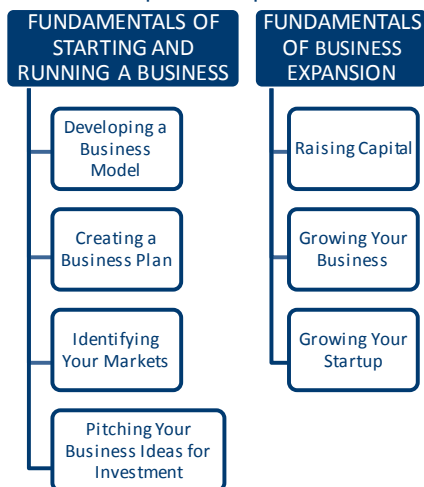## What is #YALILearns and why is it important?

#YALILearns is a Network-wide initiative to promote shared learning and collaboration among young Africans through the use of the YALI Network Online Courses. Drawing upon U.S. embassies, American Spaces, Mandela Washington Fellows, Regional Leadership Center cohorts, and YALI Network members, #YALILearns promotes face-to-face engagements, networking opportunities and knowledge sharing using the YALI Network Online Courses. #YALILearns events consist of a presentation of one or more lessons from a YALI Network Online Course and a review of the discussion guide questions and suggested developmental actions with a group. Those organizing #YALILearns events are encouraged to submit information and best practices from their events at https://yali.state.gov/eventreport/.

Through #YALILearns, the YALI Network Online Courses can be shared with young African leaders who have not been selected for the Mandela Washington Fellowship or the Regional Leadership Centers as well as underserved communities in Africa, particularly those in rural areas.
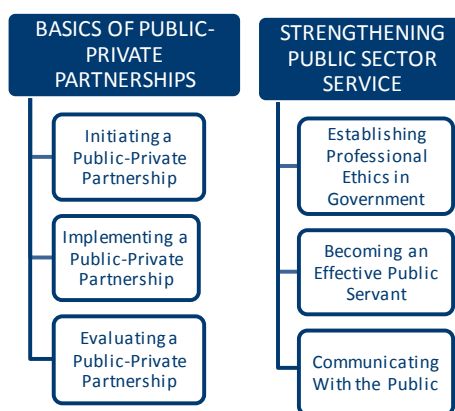
YALI Network Online Courses
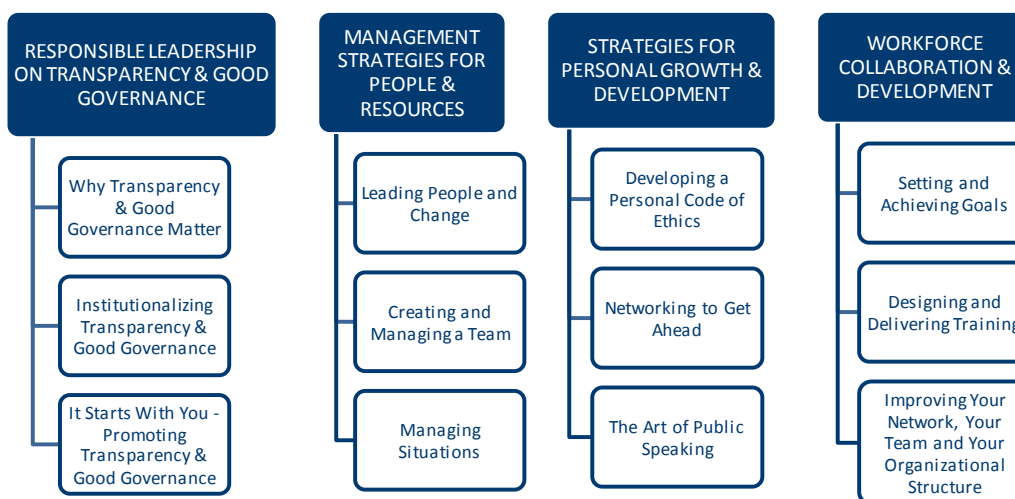
Entrepreneurship Courses

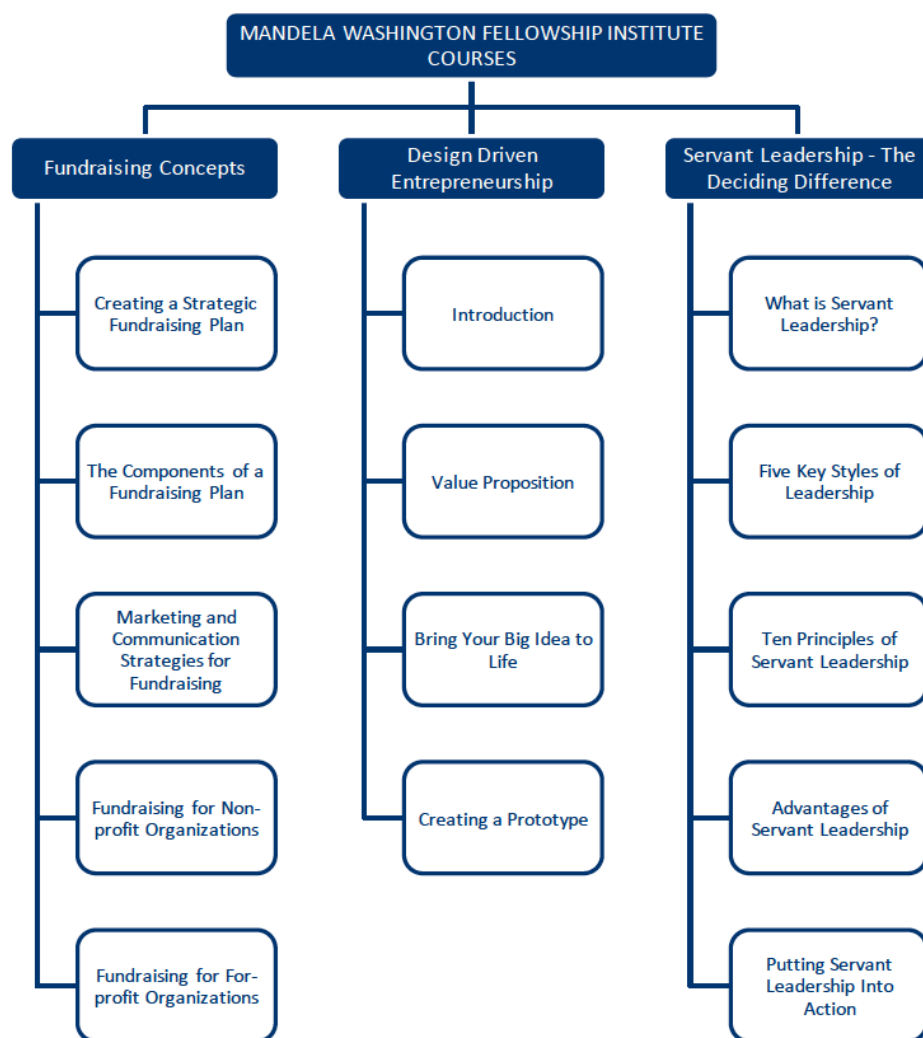**FUNDAMENTALS OF STARTING AND RUNNING A BUSINESS**
- Developing a Business Model
- Creating a Business Plan
- Identifying Your Markets
- Pitching Your Business Ideas for Investment

FUNDAMENTALS OF BUSINESS EXPANSION
- Raising Capital
- Growing Your Business
- Growing Your Startup

Civic Leadership Courses

CREATING AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
- Creating Your NGO's Strategic Plan
- Creating Partnerships
- Managing and Evaluating Projects
- Advocating for Youth

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR ACTION
- Attracting and Motivating Volunteers
- Inspiring Community Participation
- Engaging Your Community
- Creating a Successful Grassroots Campaign

Public Management Courses

BASICS OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
- Initiating a Public-Private Partnership
- Implementing a Public-Private Partnership
- Evaluating a Public-Private Partnership

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICE
- Establishing Professional Ethics in Government
- Becoming an Effective Public Servant
- Communicating With the Public

Leadership Courses

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP ON TRANSPARENCY & GOOD GOVERNANCE
- Why Transparency & Good Governance Matter
- Institutionalizing Transparency & Good Governance
- It Starts With You - Promoting Transparency & Good Governance

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PEOPLE & RESOURCES
- Leading People and Change
- Creating and Managing a Team
- Managing Situations

STRATEGIES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT
- Developing a Personal Code of Ethics
- Networking to Get Ahead
- The Art of Public Speaking

WORKFORCE COLLABORATION & DEVELOPMENT
- Setting and Achieving Goals
- Designing and Delivering Training
- Improving Your Network, Your Team and Your Organizational Structure

YALI Network Online Courses

FOCUS ON

Understanding Climate Change
- The Basics - The Scienc of Climate Change
- The Impacts - How Climate Change Affects Africa
- The Solutions - Taking Action to Reduce Climate Change

Understanding Elections and Civic Responsibility
- Getting the Most From Your Vote
- Grassroots Organizing for Civic Engagement
- Engaging with Candidates and Elected Officials

Understanding the Rights of Women and Girls
- Supporting a Girl's Right to Learn
- Paving the Way for Women Entrepreneurs
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Understanding Human Rights
- The Legal and Moral Obligations to Protect Human Rights
- Protecting Human Rights to Benefit All
- Ensuring the Human Rights of All

Understanding Renewable Energy
- The Energy of Tomorrow
- The Power System
- Energy and You

MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP INSTITUTE COURSES

Fundraising Concepts
- Creating a Strategic Fundraising Plan
- The Components of a Fundraising Plan
- Marketing and Communication Strategies for Fundraising
- Fundraising for Non-profit Organizations
- Fundraising for For-profit Organizations

Design Driven Entrepreneurship
- Introduction
- Value Proposition
- Bring Your Big Idea to Life
- Creating a Prototype

Servant Leadership - The Deciding Difference
- What is Servant Leadership?
- Five Key Styles of Leadership
- Ten Principles of Servant Leadership
- Advantages of Servant Leadership
- Putting Servant Leadership Into Action

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Course Descriptions and Lessons

See https://yali.state.gov/courses/ for complete lesson descriptions.

Subject Area: Entrepreneurship

Course: *Fundamentals of Starting and Running a Business*
This course explains critical aspects of entrepreneurship, from the process of developing a business, to how to identify and expand in the marketplace, and how to pitch to new investors.

Lessons:
- *Developing a Business Model*
- *Creating a Business Plan*
- *Identifying Your Markets*
- *Pitching Your Business Ideas for Investment*

Course: *Fundamentals of Business Expansion*
Growth is one of the biggest challenges for most businesses. Learn how to raise capital and realize growth by using your business model to assess new markets and potential date for expansion.

Lessons:
- *Raising Capital*
- *Growing Your Business*
- *Growing Your Startup*

Subject Area: Civic Leadership

Course: *Creating and Maintaining Social Enterprises*
This course examines key aspects in developing nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) including the importance of partnerships with the private sector and government, how to determine if a social enterprise identifies and meets the needs of the community, and how to effectively advocate for youth.

Lessons:
- *Creating Your NGO's Strategic Plan*
- *Creating Partnerships*
- *Managing and Evaluating Projects*
- *Advocating for Youth*

Course: *Community Organizing for Action*
Grassroots campaigns and volunteers are essential to the success of most non-governmental organizations involved in community development. Learn how to inspire and engage volunteers to be proactive in their communities and organize grassroots campaigns.

Lessons:
- *Attracting and Motivating Volunteers*
- *Inspiring Community Participation*
- *Engaging Your Community*
- *Creating a Successful Grassroots Campaign*

Subject Area: Public Management

Course: *Basics of Public-Private Partnerships*
Public-private partnerships are often the most effective and efficient means to resolving major societal challenges that are too big for one entity alone. Learn how to initiate, implement and evaluate a public-private partnership.

Lessons:
- *Initiating a Public-Private Partnership*
- *Implementing a Public-Private Partnership*
- *Evaluating a Public-Private Partnership*

Course: *Strengthening Public Sector Service*
Becoming a strong and effective public servant is not easy. This course will discuss ways to uphold transparency and objectivity while being adept at communicating with the public.

Lessons:
- *Establishing Professional Ethics in Government*
- *Becoming an Effective Public Servant*
- *Communicating with the Public*

Subject Area: Leadership

Course: *Responsible Leadership on Transparency and Good Governance*
This three-part course examines the concepts of transparency and good governance and how their lack in both the public and private sectors can lead to devastating consequences for people and institutions. The course also takes a look at the ways in which governments, businesses and individuals can create systems and practices to reduce and eliminate corruption while promoting transparency and good governance.

Lessons:
- *Why Transparency and Good Governance Matter*
- *Institutionalizing Transparency and Good Governance*
- *It Starts With You – Promoting Transparency and Good Governance*

Course: *Management Strategies for People and Resources*
This course outlines the essential skills required to lead individuals and organizations, whether solving problems, creating the optimal team or maneuvering through difficult management situations.

Lessons:
- *Leading People and Change*
- *Creating and Managing a Team*
- *Managing Situations*

Course: *Strategies for Personal Growth and Development*
Learn different ways you can develop your business, organization and personal skills.

Lessons:
- *Developing a Personal Code of Ethics*
- *Networking to Get Ahead*
- *The Art of Public Speaking*

Course: *Workforce Collaboration and Development*
Brush up on best practices in developing a collaborative work environment, including identifying key priorities, developing staff competencies and ensuring a diverse and effective workforce.

Lessons:
- *Setting and Achieving Goals*
- *Designing and Delivering Training*
- *Improving Your Network, Your Team, and Your Organizational Structure*

Subject Area: Policy

Focus On: *Understanding Climate Change*
Temperatures are rising, weather is becoming more extreme and less predictable, and drought is an increasing danger for communities from California to the Sahel. For many around the globe, dire predictions and warnings have been how citizens have learned about the dangers of climate change. In this course, the focus is on the science of how climate change occurs, the impact on the environment and human development, and practical and innovative solutions to address the causes of climate change while meeting the needs of the world.

Lessons:
- *The Basics: The Science of Climate Change*
- *The Impacts: How Climate Change Affects Africa*
- *The Solutions: Taking Action to Reduce Climate Change*

Focus On: *Understanding Elections and Civic Responsibility*
This three-part course seeks to educate and inform on the role of citizens in the electoral process, and provide guidance on how to exercise civic responsibility and hold candidates and officials accountable - before, during, and after elections. Individual lessons in this course will cover general information on the voting process, grassroots organizing for campaigns, and practical skill development for capacity building and advocacy.

Lessons:
- *Getting the Most From Your Vote*
- *Grassroots Organizing for Civic Engagement*
- *Engaging with Candidates and Elected Officials*

Focus On: *Understanding the Rights of Women and Girls*

This three-lesson course addresses the marginalization and unique challenges facing women and girls - from gender discrimination and inequality in education to a lack of opportunity in business to assaults on their safety and dignity from gender-based violence. The course offers practical steps for individuals in business, government, and civil society to take to alleviate these challenges and empower female populations politically, socially, and economically.

Lessons:
- *Supporting a Girl's Right to Learn*
- *Paving the Way for Women Entrepreneurs*
- *Ending Violence Against Women & Girls*

Focus On: *Understanding Human Rights*

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, whatever their nationality, gender, ethnic origin, sexuality, color, physical ability, religion or language or social or economic statues, No practice or traditions is greater than the human rights that belong to all of us. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. This course provides details on the evolution of laws and protections and how to work on behalf of human rights.

Lessons:
- *The Legal and Moral Obligations to Protect Human Rights*
- *Protecting Human Rights to Benefit All*
- *Ensuring the Human Rights of All*

Focus On: *Understanding Renewable Energy*

Renewable energy is any energy source that is naturally replenished - those derived from the sun, wind, rain, tides, waves and geothermal heat. Developing the best practices and technologies to transition countries to renewable energy from fossil fuels is one of the most exciting challenges of our time. Renewable energy creates new opportunities and jobs for many different sectors. It's the energy of tomorrow. This course will explore the present and future of renewable energy. It takes a look at how existing power systems work and can be adapted to a renewable energy future, and talks about what you can do to make an impact.

Lessons:
- *The Energy of Tomorrow*
- *The Power System*
- *Energy and You*

Mandela Washington Fellowship Institute Online Courses

Course: *Fundraising Concepts*
This five-lesson course examines the key principles of fundraising for non-profit and for-profit endeavors. It provides instruction on how to create and implement strategic fundraising plans, how to design and execute marketing and communication strategies needed for fundraising, and the difference between fundraising for non-profit and for-profit organization.

Lessons:
- *Developing a Fundraising Plan*
- *Components of a Fundraising Plan*
- *Marketing and Communication Plan*
- *Funding Opportunities for Non-profit Organizations*
- *Funding Opportunities for For-profit Organizations*

Course: *Design Driven Entrepreneurship*
This four-lesson course explains Design Driven Entrepreneurship, a planning process that involves identifying, creating, testing, and implementing marketable solutions for challenges facing people and communities. This course covers the origins of human-centered design theory, the process and tools needed to design and maintain a human-centered business, and best practices for developing and testing products.

Lessons:
- *Design Driven Entrepreneurship*
- *Value Proposition*
- *Bring Your Big Idea to Life*
- *Creating a Prototype*

Course: *Servant Leadership - The Deciding Difference*
Servant Leadership, a philosophy and set of practices meant to create a more just and caring world, has changed the way many people view their roles in professional organizations and government leadership. This course will go over origins and principles of servant leadership, a comparative review of other key leadership styles, the benefits and criticisms of servant leadership, and how to become a servant leader.

Lessons:
- *What is Servant Leadership?*
- *Five Key Styles of Leadership*
- *Ten Principles of Servant Leadership*
- *Advantages of Servant Leadership*
- *Putting Servant Leadership Into Action*

Facilitating Offline Learning with a Group

Using YALI Network Online Courses offline
- YALI Network Online Courses can easily be used offline for group programs.
- Audio, video and transcript files can also be downloaded from the YALI website at https://yali.state.gov/courses/downloads/.
- Use the #YALILearns flash drives containing all the YALI Network Online Courses.

Flash drives contain all of the YALI Network Online Courses including:
- Every course and its lesson
- Video, audio, and transcript files in English; select courses in French
- Discussion Guides with developmental actions
- Course quizzes
- IIP Resources (relevant pamphlets and publications)
- #YALILearns Toolkit
- YALI Voices Podcasts

The content on the flash drives may be duplicated and distributed for use by the YALI Network, Mandela Washington Fellows, and Regional Leadership Center cohort attendees, for local programming in your communities.

Flash drives do not contain:
- The YALI Network Online Courses quiz keys with correct answers for every quiz.
- The certificate form for YALI Network Online Courses. Certificates can only be obtained by taking and passing the quiz online.

#YALILearns Event Planning Toolkit

We want to help make your **#YALILearns** event a success—and if you follow the included steps, it will be! This step-by-step event planning guide explains the process for conducting a #YALILearns event:

1 Take a Course   **2** Plan Your Event   **3** Conduct Your Event   **4** Report Back
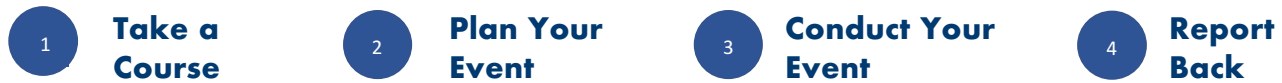
#YALILearns also provides a number of resources that can help as you plan your event. The YALI Network does not provide support or materials for events, but you can use these materials or have them printed at your own cost. Promotional materials and event are available at https://yali.state.gov/learns. Download course materials at https://yali.state.gov/downloads.

- **Event facilitation guide**: Sample agendas, sample icebreakers and activities, and event content notes can help you plan and conduct your event. This content is tailored for individual YALI Network Online Courses.

- **Discussion guides**: Print out the relevant discussion guides that accompany each lesson that you will want to use at your event.

- **Designs for promotional materials**: Promotional materials such as t-shirts can be a great way to reward participation in your event while also raising awareness of the cause to a larger audience.
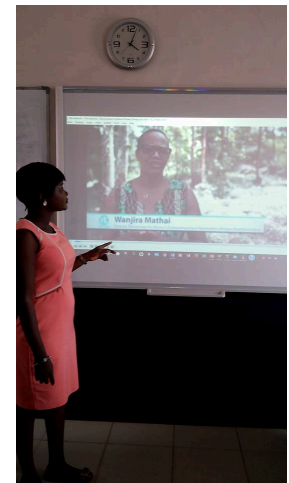
If you have any questions or are looking for best practices and ideas as you plan your event, don't hesitate to reach out to your YALI Network peers through the YALI Network face2face Facebook group: facebook.com/groups/yalinetwork/.

Organizing a #YALILearns Event

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1. Take a Course

☐ Take the YALI Network Online Course of interest to you.

☐ Pass the online quiz and receive your certificate for completing the course.

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2. Plan your Event

☐ **Watch the Designing and Delivering Training lesson** (available at https://yali.state.gov/courses/%20workforce-collab-2/) for information on planning a training event.

☐ **Identify your audience**. Do they live and/or work in your community? Are they already actively involved in the topic you will be discussing or are they new to it? These are the kinds of questions that can help you focus your event.

☐ **Develop an agenda**. Identify which course lesson(s) you would like to teach and how long the event should be. In addition to the lesson(s), fill in the time with discussions and activities. Be sure to customize your event agenda to fit your audience's needs and interests, as well as the time available. If you want to teach several lessons but can't plan a long event, perhaps you can plan multiple sessions.

☐ **Plan the logistics of your event**.
- Find a location to host your event. Community centers, schools and American Spaces are great places to start. If these venues are not available, consider holding the event at your home or in a local park.
- Decide how many people you will invite to the event.
- Pick a date and time that works for you and your location. Keep in mind your target audience's work or school schedules if applicable.

☐ **Decide how you will present the course**. You have four options (available at https://yali.state.gov/courses/):
- Stream the videos,
- Download the videos,
- Play the audio,
- Print and distribute the written transcript.

☐ **Promote your event**.
- Create an event on YALI Network face2face (facebook.com/groups/yalinetwork/events/). Invite friends through your event invitation, and consider adding a post to the YALI Network face2face newsfeed.
- Send an email, WhatsApp message or SMS to friends, family and others in your network inviting them to your #YALILearns event.
- Be sure to provide all the relevant details (topic, date, location, etc.).

☐ To prepare for your event, the discussion guides for the individual lessons are linked under the Resources tab within the online course(s).

☐ **Practice your presentation**. If possible, use the same space and computer you plan to use for your event so you are comfortable with the audio, video projection and space. This is also a great way to time your event, making sure you hit all of the major points without spending too much time on one topic or section.

☐ Please remember that all #YALILearns events are organized on the basis of educating your community with shared YALI Network resources. **You should never charge a fee for a YALI Network event**.

3. Conduct Your Event

☐ Create your own or follow the #YALILearns Sample Program Session on the next page.

☐ Introduce the topic and present your chosen YALI Network Online Course.

☐ Lead a review of each lesson and solicit questions and comments from the audience.

☐ Be sure to create an inclusive environment that allows for positive, constructive conversation. You can do so with some of the following techniques:

- Have participants introduce themselves.
- Share your own views and experiences with the group.
- Be clear about expectations of respect and consideration from the beginning.
- Encourage participants to share and challenge their own views by asking questions.

☐ Use the lesson Discussion Guide (available under the Resources tab for each YALI Network Online Course lesson) to facilitate a group conversation on the topic.

- The Learning Objectives are a good way to clarify terms.
- The Discussion Questions are a useful resource for questions to ask the group to start dialogue.
- The Developmental Actions will assist in putting the lesson material into practice.

☐ Invite participants to join the YALI Network if they are not already members and encourage participants to hold their own #YALILearns events.

☐ Relax and enjoy the event! You've planned well and the participants will have a great time.

4. Report Back

Congratulations on facilitating a #YALILearns event!

☐ Tell us how your event went via the #YALILearns feedback form (available at https://yali.state.gov/eventreport/).

☐ Share your success on the YALI Network face2face page (facebook.com/groups/yalinetwork/) to inspire others to lead their own #YALILearns events.

☐ Plan your next #YALILearns event!

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#YALILearns Sample Program Session

Choose a YALI Network Online Course (https://yali.state.gov/course) that is of interest to you and use the following outline as a guide to facilitate a program around each of the course lessons.

Timeline: 2 hour event, with multiple lessons, engaging activities and opportunities for future events.

Introduce yourself (2 minutes)

Introduce yourself as someone who wants to start an important conversation about the course topic that you've chosen – remember to keep it short!

Explain the Structure of the Event (1 minute)

Give participants an agenda to follow for the session. Walk them through what to expect, including interactive activities and outcomes outlined below. *Don't forget to explain all directions and activities fully and clearly before you begin.*

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Watch out – these can take a long time if you let everyone introduce themselves!

Suggested Activity: Introduce Yourself in 20 Words or Less
- Have participants choose a partner and each person introduces themselves in 20 words or less by addressing the following points:
  - Include your name, where you are from, what are you passionate about, and what you are doing to solve a problem in your community.
- Repeat this 3 or 5 times - ring a bell or ask people to switch partners at 1 minute. Remind attendees that introductions should be short and fast.
  - After several introductions around the room, attendees should have a good idea of who their fellow
    participants are, even if they have not been introduced to everyone.

Group Activity: Brainstorm on the topic (10 minutes)
Goal: challenge a group to name 10 issues/ideas/solutions on the chosen course topic
- Split participants into groups of 3-5 (as appropriate for event size)
- Give 5 minutes to brainstorm about a particular aspect of the topic
- Have one person from each group present their list to the whole group

Brief group discussion to summarize activity:
- Did most groups come up with the same 10 items?
- What were the most unique ideas that were presented?

Watch the 1st course lesson (approximately 4 - 6 minutes)

Break (5 minutes)

Group Discussion (15 minutes)
- Choose one of the questions from the corresponding lesson's Discussion Guide.
- Compare the issues/ideas/solutions to those offered in the video when answering the questions.

Watch the 2nd course lesson (approximately 4 - 6 minutes)

Group Activity: Awareness Skit (20 minutes)
- Give pairs or small groups 5 minutes to plan a skit; then perform each for the whole group. Encourage humor and fun!
- Example: Have group members play the roles of a business executive, funder, bank loan officer, community member, or government official and pitch an idea or solution. Pick a specific issue that is relevant to the subject matter. (Maximum 5 groups)
- After the skits are completed ask the attendees for their thoughts. Encourage everyone to be respectful and offer constructive input.

Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- Choose one of the questions from the corresponding lesson's Discussion Guide.

Watch the 3rd course lesson (approximately 4 - 6 minutes)

Group Activity: Action/Solutions Action Planning (25 minutes)
- As a group, brainstorm ideas/actions/solutions related to the subject matter that can continue after the YALI Learns event.
- Break into pairs or small groups to come up with an action plan for completing one of the ideas or solutions.
- Have each group present their ideas to the larger group.

Action plans should include:
- Come up with ideas to complete the development actions included in the lesson Discussion Guides.
  - Example: generate ideas for identifying a business or project.
- What are the next steps an individual should take?
  - Example: write a business plan, a speech, a funding plan, or a campaign manifesto.
- How do you keep the momentum going?
  - Example: Identify additional resources you will need to complete the developmental actions, including arranging to meet with like-minded individuals – *network!*

Wrap-up (5 minutes):
- Encourage attendees to take the online course quiz available at https://yali.state.gov/courses to earn a YALI Network certificate.
- Encourage participants to sign up for the YALI Network, hold a follow-up #YALILearns session, and carry out their action plans together.

Important Note
Encourage attendees to work together and offer to help others with answers to questions that they don't know the answers to - they don't have to be experts, but they can establish themselves as a leader within the group. The goal is to start a conversation and facilitate discussion and let the video provide expert information.

YALI Network Member Stories

Want insights from experienced #YALILearns event planners? Check out these great blog posts from YALI Network members who have organized events:

- 6 Lessons I Learned Organizing a YALI Network Event
- A Step By Step Planning Guide on Hosting a #YALILearns Event

"6 Lessons I Learned Organizing a YALI Network Event"

In October 2015, Abisoye Ajayi (founder of Pearls Africa) participated in a YALI Network Tech Camp designed to develop tools for grass-roots organizers in their communities. She planned her own YALI Network mini-tech camp to bring together community organizers around Lagos, Nigeria. What Abisoye learned from the experience can help Network members as they look to create their own events, big or small. And we've added a few of our own! Success is all in the planning.

They say a journey of a thousand miles starts with a step; I took mine and fell flat on my face. Those were the words of my role model Jacqueline Novogratz, and they perfectly described my first few weeks trying to put together a mini-tech camp in Nigeria.

Lesson 1: Spend more time developing your application forms so that you won't spend 10 times more making a shortlist.

I had plans for 20 participants. I received 37 applications, all beautifully crafted prose, beautiful in all ways except that I was to figure out which would be best suited for my mini-tech camp amongst all great applications. I spent a week selecting the best 20. I read through their applications and did research on each participant. It was tough, but made for a better event!

YALI adds: For your events, even small discussion groups, make sure the attendees fit the event you hope to hold. A planning session? Invite stakeholders who care about the issue and want to take action. A debate? Find opposing viewpoints to constructively discuss the issue. A learning event? Recruit individuals eager to learn more about that topic, perhaps from a certain group.

Lesson 2: Star-stud your event! But have two or three facilitators for whom it would be a privilege to speak at your event.

When I go to all these star-studded conferences with their star-studded speakers, I never would have imagined what chore it is to make stars shine in lower orbits. I had stars lined up for my tech camp, but I never knew it would be a chore trying to manage their schedules. They were really nice people but extremely busy — so busy that your heart would be in your mouth until they showed up. Many times during the days leading up to my event, I just had the feeling of an impending disappointment. That feeling you get after that speaker you had [solid] plans with suddenly isn't sure if she would be in the country on that day.

YALI adds: Inviting local experts or speakers is a great way to provide multiple perspectives to your event. They can be other YALI Network members who can help facilitate the event, an expert on the issue to help lead a discussion or teach a session, or even a local leader or notable figure to provide an opening keynote or welcome.

Lesson 3: Plan for delays in your program and call it "arrivals and networking."

On the day of the event, pray hard it doesn't rain! Especially if your event is on Lagos Island. This would have been the last thing I could have envisaged but somehow, rain happened! In Lagos, the bustling capital of excellence, once it rains everything slows down, grinding to a halt. Luckily for us on the day of the event, the rain started five minutes to the arrival time and it lasted about five minutes. But that was enough to warn me about many late arrivals.

YALI adds: No matter what the reason, people will always arrive late to events. Make sure you build in time for delays, transportation issues, and check in — a great time to have attendees network with one another, and start on small brainstorming or discussion questions. Light refreshments and networking, or even "ice breakers" to get to know each other, are great to fill time as more individuals arrive.

Lesson 4: Make the program as flexible as possible such that the delay of one facilitator doesn't affect the event flow.

Like the many movies that have framed my view of the world, I like it when the actor comes in [to save the day] to the climax of a Hans Zimmer score. But life's not like that! So I had planned the event to be kicked off by a notable personality and enshrined it in the program of events. Unfortunately, my notable personality did not arrive on time so my program was delayed.

YALI adds: Build in redundancies and always have a back-up plan should your guests not arrive on time or at all. Be careful about building your event around one person or specific groups in particular. Make sure you focus on the goals of the event. Confirm with your guests in advance so that you can cancel or postpone if their presence is critical.

Lesson 5: Be ready to capture the energy of the meeting. Collect feedback and be ready to continue the conversation after the event.

When you bring three of the most bright and passionate ladies in a room, expect a big response. We started strong and the energy did not stop until the end — it was a full immersion into the world of storytelling. The participants were all excited to see that they could do much more with the social media tools they were already exposed to, and collaborations began to form. All the organizations working on child rape issues realized that they could amplify the cases, which they became involved with daily through social media, so they decided to work together to create a platform for that. Also, all the participants wanted a more prolonged interaction so we created a Whatsapp group to continue the conversations. This made me realize that you don't expect to give people a good meal without anticipating they will ask for more.

YALI adds: A single event is a great first step toward community action and change. Make sure you engage with the most active individuals in attendance and continue to work with them long after the event is over. Work together to find a common cause or challenge to solve together.

Finally, Angels are real. I had a lot of help preparing for my mini-tech camp. Ask for assistance from friends and colleagues who you can call when you are tired and a minute from giving up altogether. Perhaps this is the most important lesson: Always ask for help! There are people who know more than you at organizing workshops, would be honored to help you, or also have set out to solve similar problems. If you are lucky, your Angels might be as nice as mine.

U.S. Department of State | International Information Programs

"A Step By Step Planning Guide on Hosting a #YALILearns Event"
By Chukwuma Ephraim Okenwa

As a YALI Network member you have probably taken at least one YALI Network Online Course and earned a certificate and are perhaps contemplating organizing a #YALILearns event to share what you learned with your sphere of contact. However, the challenge might be on how to go about it.

Organizing a #YALILearns event is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart step to take after you have gone through a YALI Network Online Course. It offers you an opportunity to consolidate what you learned and to give back to your community and to help mentor other young Africans.

#YALILearns events involve educating your community with shared YALI Network resources, hence you should never charge a fee to participants.

You will find the steps outlined here a useful guide for hosting a successful #YALILearns event.

Stick to the Basics
Which YALI Network online course do you wish to facilitate? That should help to give a clue what kind of audience you will have to engage. Choose an audience whose individuals are directly or indirectly concerned with the proposed topic. Someone organizing a #YALILearns event on climate change, may consider inviting farmers, government agencies or individuals.

Farmers could be encouraged by such event to do more for afforestation. Individuals will learn how their small actions can negatively impact our climate and how slight adjustments on their part will help greatly in reversing the trend. The government agencies in turn will be motivated to sponsor bills that will favor the climate.

A topic such as *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls* sounds appropriate for a feminine audience but in the real sense is good for the male folks, who in most cases are the culprits when it comes to gender-based violence.

A civic leadership course would make much sense to leaders of NGOs and leaders of civil society groups.

The course objectives can serve as a guide in deciding what kind of persons will benefit the most from your #YALILearns event. Each lesson includes a discussion guide with objectives and important points for your audience.

Choice of Venue
Choosing a venue will have great impact on your event. The venue for the event sets the mood and tone before your audience arrives.

Consider using a natural environment with green areas or trees for your event on climate change; a Women Development Centre for the topic Paving Way for the Women Entrepreneurs, etc. Where such relative venues are not readily accessible, the available one can be modified to reflect the theme of your event.

A #YALILearns event can actually be held in any venue that you consider conducive to your audience; the environment automatically becomes a #YALILearns "classroom" once the online course is streamed, or when the transcripts are distributed and discussed among participants.

Aesthetics such as roll-up banners, relevant charts/pictures can also help to reflect the theme, but are not at all obligatory. A small group could discuss these important issues and review materials in any venue at all.

As the administrator at a school, I have access to a site that is optimal for learning. It is equipped with computers and printers. If there are similar venues near you, I would recommend that you contact them to see if they would let you use their space. When I make use of the school premises where I work, I do so at no cost. However, on two occasions when I hosted the #YALILearns events at some other venues, I took time to share the vision of YALI and the purpose of the #YALILearns events with the owners of such place; the goodwill was awesome. I got discounts of 90% and 50% respectively. In those cases, I fund the event myself and I take delight in doing so. YALI educates me for free and that's my own little way of extending the same opportunities to my own sphere of contacts. When you find a venue that is willing to support #YALILearns, share it with others. I have told the YALI Network members within Enugu, Nigeria to feel free to apply to use my school for their #YALILearns Event – at no cost!

Promote Your Event
Create your event in the YALI Network Face2Face group at www.facebook.com/groups/YALInetwork to invite YALI Network members in the areas near you.

You can invite friends, family and others via SMS, Whatsapp or email. I have found bulk SMS quite effective. Speaking to individuals on one-on-one basis has also yielded good results. I also make sure to create an event at the YALI Network Face2Face group by visiting https://www.facebook.com/groups/yalinetwork/events/, then finding the button for "Create Event." Make sure to provide city, country and event details – then share the event with the group to invite other YALI Network members.

A letter of invitation is also recommended, if you wish to invite high profile individuals in your community, but again, this is not required. You can facilitate many of these courses without inviting high profile individuals. You are probably more of an expert on many of these topics than you give yourself credit for – and starting a conversation with the discussion guides makes the event inclusive and participatory In addition, there will be audience members who will be able to contribute their knowledge to the conversation.

Be Consistent with #YALILearns Ideals
You can present the YALI Network Online Course either by streaming the video or audio, downloading the video or audio, or you can print and distribute the written transcripts to participants.

Be sure to review the lesson discussion guides for the course you wish to facilitate. Find time to watch the lesson, *Designing and Delivering Training*. In all, let the learning objectives serve as a sure guide to evaluating how successful your event was.

Be sure to keep records of your events: highlights, pictures or video and sometimes a communiqué are reasonably expected.

Make it Very Interactive
Have participants choose a partner and have each person introduce themselves briefly. This should include name, occupation and personal interests/motivation and way(s) the individual serves to improve his community.

Initiate brief discussions after watching each segment of the video. Give room for group activity by splitting the participants into small groups to brainstorm on relevant issues connected with the course and having a selected person by the group to present to the whole audience what they discussed in their unit groups.

Awareness skits are another great way to engage the participants. For instance, if you are facilitating a session on the topic *Supporting a Girl's Right to Learn*, you can have a participant play the role of an out-of-school girl and have another person try to convince her to go back to school. At the end of the skit, ask the out-of-school girl, if she was indeed convinced.

Encourage participants to share their experiences where applicable. A #YALILearns event on *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls*, will not be complete without having a few persons who have experienced gender- based violence share their experiences.

After the event, I make room for the participants to respond to the lectures, sharing with us things they were able to LEARN, UNLEARN AND RELEARN and how they intend to take advantage of their new experience to do things differently. Thereafter I advocate strongly for participants to visit yali.state.gov, review the course once more and take the online quiz to earn their YALI Network Online Course certificate.

Keep the flow
Encourage participants to join the network by filling in their details atyali.state.gov. Collect the email addresses of participants and submit them alongside your report on the #YALILearns feedback page.

The email address that you submitted could assist in inviting them to join the biggest network of young African Leaders.

Most importantly remember to share the highlights of your events with other YALI Network members on the YALI Network Face2Face group.

This will inspire other Network members to do likewise, thus resulting in an ever-increasing impact. You can start now!